Basic protective measures against CORONAVIRUS

➢ Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

➢ Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

➢ **Wash your hands frequently**

➢ Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

   Why? Washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand rub kills viruses that may be on your hands.

➢ **Maintain social distancing**

   Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

   Why? When someone coughs or sneezes they spray small liquid droplets from their nose or mouth which may contain virus. If you are too close, you can breathe in the droplets, including the COVID-19 virus if the person coughing has the disease.

➢ **Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth**

   Why? Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and can make you sick.

➢ **Practice respiratory hygiene**

   Make sure you, and the people around you, follow good respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately.

   Why? Droplets spread virus. By following good respiratory hygiene you protect the people around you from viruses such as cold, flu and COVID-19.

➢ **If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early**

   Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

   Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on the situation in your area. Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also protect you and help prevent spread of viruses and other infections.

➢ **Stay informed and follow advice given by your healthcare provider**

   Why? National and local authorities will have the most up to date information on whether COVID-19 is spreading in your area. They are best placed to advise on what people in your area should be doing to protect themselves.

➢ **Protection measures for persons who are in or have recently visited (past 14 days) areas where COVID-19 is spreading**

   Follow the guidance outlined above. Stay at home if you begin to feel unwell, even with mild symptoms such as headache and slight runny nose, until you recover.

   Why? Avoiding contact with others and visits to medical facilities will allow these facilities to operate more effectively and help protect you and others from possible COVID-19 and other viruses.

➢ If you develop fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical advice promptly as this may be due to a respiratory infection or other serious condition. Call in advance and tell your provider of any recent travel or contact with travelers.

➢ **Why?** Calling in advance will allow your health care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. This will also help to prevent possible spread of COVID-19 and other viruses.

➢ **Practice other good health habits.** Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

➢ **Clean and disinfect** doorknobs, switches, handles, computers, telephones, bedside tables, bathroom sinks, toilets, counters, toys and other surfaces that are commonly touched around the home or workplace.

➢ **To the extent possible, avoid touching commonly used surfaces in public places** like elevator buttons, door handles and handrails and avoid handshaking with people. Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your hand or finger if you must touch something.

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